

## Message Text

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R 291456Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3941

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

USMISSION USBERLIN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 12385

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PINT, UR

SUBJECT: UNOFFICIAL ARTISTS ANNIVERSARY EXHIBITION BANNED

1. UNOFFICIAL ARTISTS ARE NOW ON A COLLISION COURSE WITH SOVIET AUTHORITIES OVER AN ART EXHIBITION TO BE HELD ON THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE NOTORIUS "ART MASSACRE" OF SEPTEMBER 15, 1974. MEMBERS OF THE "INITIATIVE GROUP" HAVE HELD DISCUSSIONS IN A POSITIVE SPIRIT OVER THE LAST TWO MONTHS WITH THE MOSCOW CITY CULTURAL ADMINISTRATION BUT WERE RECENTLY SENT TO THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE USSR ONCE IT WAS ESTABLISHED THAT THE PUTATIVE EXHIBITORS WOULD INCLUDE ARTISTS FROM OUTSIDE MOSCOW. MINCULT OFFICIALS IN CHARGE OF EXHIBITION HALLS, FNU FEDEYEVA, TEMPORIZED ON THE GROUNDS THAT QUARTERS WERE IN SHORT SUPPLY. ARTISTS SPOKESMEN SET FRIDAY, AUGUST 22, AS DEADLINE FOR THE MINCULT RESPONSE, BUT MINCULT PROMISED AN ANSWER BY AUGUST 25.

2. MINCULT DECISION WAS FLAT REFUSAL TO FURNISH EXHIBITION  
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QUARTERS OR TO GRANT PERMISSION FOR AN EXHIBITION. DURING

EARLIER DISCUSSIONS, MINCULT OFFICIALS HAD BEEN EAGER TO AVOID AN OPEN-AIR EXHIBITION, BEARING IN MIND MASSIVE NEGATIVE PUBLICITY IN WORLD PRESS AFTER FRACAS AT BELYAYEVO SITE LAST SEPTEMBER.

3. UNOFFICIAL ARTISTS WERE DETERMINED TO MARK THE ANNIVERSARY BY AN EXHIBIT BEFORE THE REFUSAL. THEY MUST NOW DECIDE WHETHER TO STAGE UNAUTHORIZED ART SHOW AND FACE UNPLEAANT CONSEQUENCES OR TO PULL BACK. EITHER COURSE IS DIFFICULT FOR THEM, BUT THEY CONSIDER THAT FOREIGN PUBLICITY IS THEIR ONLY HOPE AT THIS TIME.

4. EMBASSY WILL KEEP DEPARTMENT INFORMED ON THIS MATTER TO BEST OF ITS ABILITY IN VIEW OF POSSIBLE CONFLICT WHICH COULD AGAIN GENERATE MUCH PUBLICITY UNFAVORABLE TO THE SOVIETS, ESPECIALLY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT. EMBASSY OPINION IS THAT SOVIET REGIME IS FULLY AWARE OF THE POSSIBILITIES AND WILL MOVE TO FORESTALL AN OPEN-AIR EXHIBITION. WESTERN PRESS IS FULLY INFORMED ON DEVELOPMENTS AND IS PRIMED BOTH FOR PLANNED EXHIBITION OR FAILURE.

5. EMBOFF WAS TOLD AUGUST 23 BY UNOFFICIAL ARTISTS THAT LEADING UNOFFICIAL PAINTER OSKAR RABIN HAD BEEN ARBITRARILY DEPRIVED OF HIS RURAL DACHA NEAR YAROSLAVL' BY LOCAL OFFICIALS WHO INSTRUCTED HIM TO REMOVE HIS DACHA FROM KOLKHOZ LAND OR DACHA WOULD BE DEMOLISHED. ARTISTS ALSO REPORTED HOSTILITY TOWARD THEMSELVES BY ORDINARY KOLKHOZNIKS WHO ALLEGEDLY BELIEVED THAT ARTISTS WERE SPIES FOR AMERICANS AND FOR THAT REASON WERE SUBJECT TO SUSPICION AND HARASSMENT.  
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